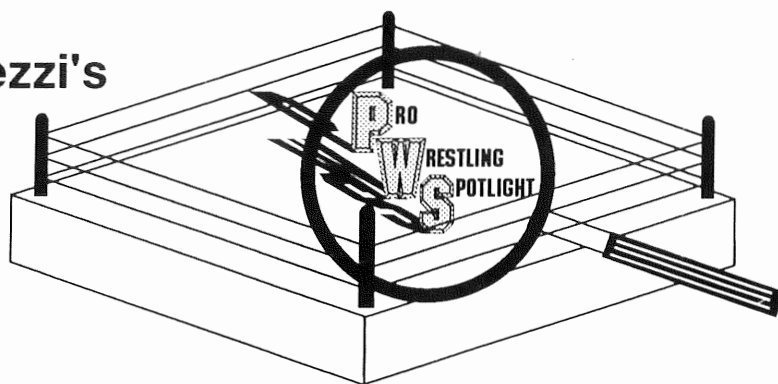


John Arezzi's



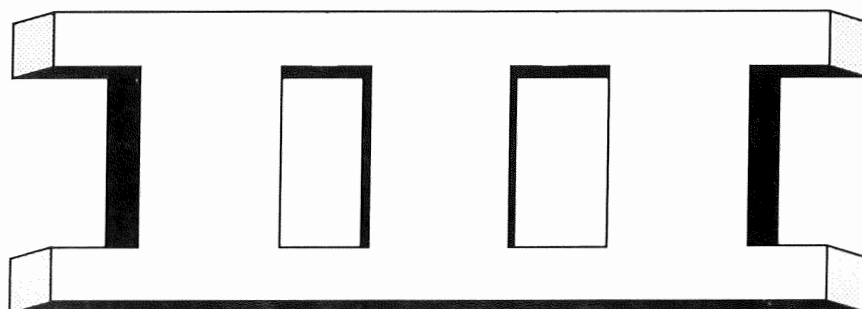
Newsletter

June 15, 1992

Issue #5

\$1.50

WEEKEND OF CHAMPIONS



Weekend of Champions III Set For August 29th & 30th

The third annual Weekend of Champions wrestling fans convention, promoted by Pro Wrestling Spotlight will take place on Saturday August 29th and Sunday August 30th, 1992. The sight of the convention will once again be the Ramada Hotel LaGuardia airport, In Elmhurst, Queens, New York. The hotel is located directly opposite the airport.

The theme of this years convention will be bringing together a number of ex-WWWF champions, as well as some other greats of the mat game. A number of stars have already been contacted, with the complete line-up for this years' two day affair to be announced on the June 20th Pro Wrestling Spotlight Radio Show and in this publication the same week.

The stars appearing at the past two conventions have included Ric Flair, Buddy Rogers, Bruno Sammartino, Sting, Cactus Jack, Lou Thesz, Billy Graham, Ricky Steamboat, Terry Funk and Rick Rude, among others. This year, similar caliber names will be included, many of whom will surprise and excite the fans who plan on attending.

Special "Super Ticket" packages will be made available on a limited basis for those coming in from out of town, Pro Wrestling Spotlight listeners and Booster Club Members as well.

The Ramada Hotel will offer special discounted rates for those coming in for the extravaganza. Reservations can be made in advance by calling Jim Rideau at the Ramada Hotel at (718)446-4800.

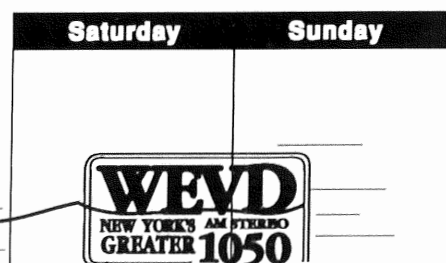
Pro Wrestling Spotlight Moves To Saturday Nights

The Pro Wrestling Spotlight Radio Show has moved to a new day, for the first time in its history. Beginning on June 20th, the show can be heard on 1050AM WEVD each Saturday evening from 11PM-12 midnight. The show currently airs Sunday evenings at 11PM.

Wrestling fans from eight Northwestern states (NY, NJ, CT, NH, MA, RI, VT, and PA) can tune in to the 50,000 watt powerhouse WEVD broadcast direct from New York City each Saturday and hear the latest news.

Fans already aware of the new time slot are pleased, as the new day allows them not to miss any sleep as the Sunday night show did, since Monday is a work day.

WEVD's call in number is (212)477-5610



Additional information regarding early purchase of Super Ticket packages can be obtained by calling John Arezzi at (516)587-2861. This year, the earlier you order your Super Ticket, the earlier you will be able to enter the convention, as each package will be numbered from 1-200.

This year the convention will feature the 2-day autograph/memorabilia show, plus our second auction of wrestling items donated by the stars appearing at the show, a question and answer session with the stars, plus a live remote broadcast of the Pro Wrestling Spotlight Radio Show direct from a top New York City Comedy Club which will feature some surprise guest stand-up comedians.

Fifty top wrestling memorabilia dealers will be featured at the convention, which takes place in the Ballroom of the Ramada.

Fans from all over the United States, Canada, Australia, Japan and the United Kingdom are expected to converge to this years Weekend Of Champions, which should be the biggest show yet.

Randy/Liz Break Up Shocks Insiders

By Editor, John Arezzi

Last weeks split up of Randy "Macho Man" Savage (Randy Poffo) and his wife Elizabeth has started the rumor mill churning with everyone wanting to know what was behind the break up. The separation of Pro Wrestling's #1 fictional and real life couple has shocked the insiders of the business.

It's a story so personal you try to report just the facts and not even speculate on the stories you've heard, no matter how credible they sound, so for now PWS will shy away from the stories we've heard.

The split up comes at a bad time for the WWF, as Elizabeth is in the middle of one of the promotions major angles, involving Savage, the current WWF champion, and Ric Flair.

Elizabeth has been one of the most popular WWF characters since her debut as Randy's hand picked manager in 1985. Her role was initially intended for Greg Valentines wife, Julie, but Valentine didn't want her to accept. Savage then brought Liz, who Vince McMahon intended to be a heel manager. She was immediately loved by the fans, and has been a major player in the WWF ever since.

It has been reported that she has been terminated by Titan Sports. It's going to be hard for McMahon to pretend she never existed, which Vince does whenever someone, except Hulk Hogan, leaves.



The USWA, in conjunction with Neptune, NJ PAL promoted a card of championship wrestling at Convention Hall in Asbury Park on Friday, May 22. The following eyewitness match report is filed by Pete Theophall.

Attendance is estimated at 350, but with all the kids on hand, the noise level was equivalent of at least twice as much. The ring was finely "tuned", resonating with loud booms at every slam, stomp, and flop. Referee for the evening was the one and only Dick Whorley, and the ring announcer was Rich Mancuso.

Al "The Sledgehammer" Beat The Wild Thing On A Count Out - Wild Thing was announced as being from "The Dark Side" with weight unknown and was decked out complete with face paint and chains. Al was the fan favorite, being from nearby Jackson, New Jersey. Wild

Thing spent lots of time outside the ring, arguing with ringside fans. Many times during the match, he went to his tights for a foreign object, but they were so tight, it didn't look like he could extract the object. It was either that, or the object got lost in some folds of fat. Both wrestlers looked out of shape and were breathing heavily. Lots of stalling and rest holds. A few good power moves by Al, but not much else. He did a "Hogan leg-drop", but forgot to hook Wild Thing's leg. Al wins on a count-out. Rating *

Misty Blue Pinned Cat LaRoux - Cat quickly established herself as the heel by grabbing the mic and saying "Asbury Park - kiss my ass!" Misty is the women's champ and came to the ring with the belt. Both ladies looked really good in their high cut, one-piece outfits. Cat gained the early advantage with hair-pull-flips and slams, although Misty countered with a variety of moves, including several head scissors. Highlight of the match came when Misty had Cat hanging over the top rope with her rear-end facing my section. Misty then pulled the bottom of Cat's tights all the way up her back. This move, which I will call "the power wedge", exposed Cat's rather attractive and shapely buttocks. At this point, I was considering taking her up on her initial offer. A crowd of fans with cameras quickly converged on this moment and the flashes were going off like a string of firecrackers. I'll take three 8X10 glossies! Whorley "helped" Cat remove the wedge - I guess that was his payoff for the night! Match ended with Cat on the top turn-buckle, spitting at the crowd. Misty slammed her off the top for the pin. Easily the best match on the card. Rating ***

D.C. Mad Dog Drake VS Larry Winters - "Mad Dog" was led toward the ring on a collar and chain by his manager. Winters had to wait in the ring for at least 15 minutes while Drake dragged his manager all over the arena, even up to the mezzanine seats, challenging each adult and terrorizing each kid in his random path. The crowd got a great kick out of this and built up heat. At one point, what appeared to be a fan jumped into the ring with a chair, which Whorley quickly grabbed and threw out. Lots of action, including a 360 into the corner by Drake. Lots of "near pins." End came when both wrestlers collided in center ring. Drake's manager slipped him a pair of brass knuckles. When D.C. swung at Winters, he missed. Winters pushed him into his manager on the apron, brass knuckles got knocked loose, and Winters used them to clock Drake and get the pin. Rating ***

Cheetah Pinned King Kahlua - Lots of acrobatic moves by Cheetah, countered with power moves from Kaluha, including atomic drops and a power bomb for a near pin. Cheetah did two top-rope walks ala the "Undertaker." Cheetah won the match with a reverse roll-up from outside the ropes for the pin. Lots of "Cheetah! Cheetah!" chants during the entire match. Rating **1/2

Bam Bam Bigelow Pinned Nikolai Volkoff - This match was strictly power VS power, and it seemed there was an unusually great number of head-butt moves by both

combatants. At one point, Bigelow missed a splash when Volkoff rolled out of the way, and I thought Bam Bam was going to go through the mat. Volkoff seemed a little off his game - at one point, after a Bam Bam head-butt, he ran all the way across the ring to do a 360 over the top rope, and while he was going over, it looked like a slow motion replay. Bam Bam finally won with an Irish whip of Nikolai's head into the corner post, followed by a roll-up for the pin. After the bell, Volkoff delivered two impressive chair-shots to Bigelow's back. Bam Bam came back with still another head-butt, and all the kids went home happy. Rating **1/2



Attendance: 117, promoted by: Jody Boyns & John McAdam (TV Taping) 5/15/92

Robbie Ellis Pinned Red Dragon with a splash off the top rope in 5:23 - Chris Cruise & Orlando West did the TV opening in center ring with Fulton, Melrose and Sykes with the two wrestlers talking of being the first UCW Champion.

Scott Sharkey Pinned Billy War Hawk with a reverse neck-breaker in a scientific match @7:35. Joel Davis came out and held War Hawk's leg at one point during the match, getting a lot of heat and ref, Scott Dickinson, had security escort Davis to the back. Thus, adding to the Revenge Match later between Davis and War Hawk.

Freight Train Fulton Beat Maverick Sykes in a UCW tournament Semi-Final match, with a clothesline to a pin @ 10:39.

Vince Apollo was out for an interview when Joel Davis came out and said that Apollo was his "favorite wrestler", Apollo then demonstrated the figure four on Davis and would not release it. Apollo put up a \$1,000 wager to anyone who could break his figure four. Davis asked Apollo to be his tag-team partner, Apollo turned him down with, "You couldn't carry my sweat."

Bruno V. (Half Of The Untouchables) Won Over Scott Sharkey (Local Favorite) by DQ in 8:48 when the Thunderbolts made a save and did a run in.

Steve Ramsey (Half Of The Thunderbolts) Pinned Red Dragon @ 4:10 after a flying body-press.

Untouchables Beat Thunderbolts by a DQ @ 10:23 following a run-in by T-Bolt, Ramsey, who was DDT'd on the floor earlier and bled. He was escorted to the back by Scott Sharkey, leaving T-Bolt, Taylor, to take on both Untouches. When a recovered Ramsey came running back to the ring the Bolts were disqualified.

Billy War Hawk was interviewed, he challenged Davis for the upcoming match to settle the score with him for turning on him in a tag match.

Thunderbolts were interviewed continuing the feud with the Untouchables.

Bill Wilcox Beat Vince Apollo @ 13:41 with a small package pin. Starts slow with Apollo strutting, not many high spots. Wilcox did a flying body press onto Apollo, who was on the outside landing on the arena floor. This was the other UCW tournament semi-final match. Leaving Bill Wilcox VS F.T. Fulton for the belt on 5/29 in finals.

F.T. Fulton and Manager, Travis Melrose were interviewed claiming to become the first UCW champ. Fulton gives a great interview.

Joel Davis Defeated Billy War Hawk by a DQ @ 5:50 after War Hawk hit the ref twice. Sharkey and the Bolts came in to split it up.

Cruise and Apollo started the open for another week of TV in center ring. In an interview Apollo claimed he would go to the authorities about his match with Wilcox saying Wilcox pulled the tights. (Apollo had his tights hanging down for a while in that match with Wilcox, and will probably continue a feud from there.)

Universal Championship Wrestling returns to St. Stanislaus Hall in Nashua, NH on 5/29 with the finals of the UCW title tournament with Bill Wilcox VS Freight Train Fulton. For tickets call:603-888-4516.

Report By: Gary Langevin-Editor ON THE MAT, match results and times courtesy of Lois Fortuna who was in attendance covering the event. Thanks!

PWS Interviews Dave Meltzer

By John Arezzi

Dave Meltzer needs no introduction to anyone associated with professional wrestling. Whether you work in the business, or are just a serious fan of wrestling, you're familiar with Dave and his publication, "*The Wrestling Observer*." *The Observer* is the most widely read "inside" publication in the mat world. Often called "*The New York Times*" of pro wrestling, *The Observer* covers all the inside and outside ring news fit to print. With over 5,000 weekly subscribers, a legion of fans who swear by his every word, and a number of those employed in wrestling who feel Dave helps kill the business with each issue, Meltzer is talked about almost more than the wrestlers themselves. Dave granted me an exclusive interview to talk about the most talked about wrestling journalist ever, him. This is the first part of the interview. Each week for the next 3 weeks you can read about the man responsible for changing the way many (including myself) view pro wrestling.

John Arezzi: How many years have you been involved with the wrestling business?

Dave Meltzer: I started as early as 1970-71. I did a newsletter from 71-75 when I was in Jr. High. I stopped it when I went to high school. I first called it "California Wrestling Report", then I changed it to "The International Wrestling Gazette." Through high school and the beginning of college I followed wrestling somewhat but not as hard core as when I was in Jr. High. I really started getting back into it during my senior year in college. I was trading videos by then which got me more involved. I was seeing all the different territories, and it picked up my interest level. Right around then was when I decided to do *The Observer*. Not that many people were trading videos. It was kind of a different perspective. Instead of just trading results, you could see all these guys in the different territories. When I was a kid, you would read about all the territories but not see matches from them. By video tape trading I was getting to see how good a lot of these guys were, not only here, but in Japan. It was a whole new experience. I wanted to do a newsletter based on that.

When I was in college, I was on the newspaper staff. I found out that out of a class of 45 people, 5 or 6 of them were wrestling fans that watched Georgia Championship Wrestling, and the AWA. This was about 1980-81. They would watch all this wrestling, but these were people who never read a wrestling magazine. I was just amazed at how interested they were in wrestling. They were interested in wrestling the same way I was. They knew what it was, and just enjoyed it for the entertainment value. They looked at it in a completely different way than one would assume the stereotypical fan did. I realized with that, there was a big audience out there that was intrigued with professional wrestling, but probably wouldn't go to matches that often, because at that time it was socially unacceptable. But they watched it on TV every week,

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June 20. See page 1 for details



LISTEN AND LEARN



knew all the names of the guys, and were familiar with story lines. So, I kind of started doing the newsletter for people like that. It was in 1982 when I started *The Observer*.

JA: What was your format back then?

DM: I reviewed what was going on the different territories, mainly from the videotapes, and I started getting news reports from various people like when I was younger. I started doing some editorials. I put it out once a month in the beginning, then every three weeks, because there was so much news, after 1984-85.

JA: How did you publicize *The Observer* back then? Was it through the magazines?

DM: I publicized it through the magazines, but it was mainly word of mouth in those days. All the people who traded tapes kind of passed it around. It was a completely new deal. Norman Dooley, who was Jim Cornette's best friend growing up put out a newsletter, but it wasn't that widely circulated. A lot of what I did was taken from what he did. He wrote some really funny stuff, so a lot of the



comedy ideas I took from him. As far as the stars, given to rate matches, actually that was Jim Cornette's idea. Giving stars negative rating on up to 5 stars, that was all Jim Cornette's idea that Norman Dooley used in his newsletter that I pretty much stole. People credited me for inventing the system, but it was Cornette's idea.

JA: That would surprise a lot of people. The way a lot of the boys in the business talk about the star system today. A lot of people in the business don't like it. It would surprise them to find out someone in the business developed that concept.

DM: (Laughing) Oh Yeah. A lot of things in *The Observer* were developed by people within the industry. A lot of the ways I went about my reporting were determined by people in the industry. They would tell me this is what I should be concentrating on. They would tell me this what I should be concentrating on, and what the things that people are most interested in, stuff like that. For example, reports on the live gates. To the boys, the gates were important, because that was what they were paid on. Back in the days of the territories they wanted to know what territories were doing business-wise. The promoters were always lying, saying "were doing X amount of business", and then you'd get there and find out they're doing a third of what was told to them. So they'd get paid about one third of what they were expecting. So, *The Observer*, in that way, could have been, and was, very beneficial. Other people took a very negative approach to it.

Norman Dooley did a lot of the stuff before me. He was violating Kayfabe, but he wasn't as widely circulated, as I would later become. I think I was the first person to widely circulate and report wrestling in this manner. All it is, is a truthful manner. I felt that the people I knew were way too intelligent to believe the newsstand magazine, especially after 1984, when Vince McMahon started taking over the territories. Everybody was intrigued by who was going on up there, why so many were. What was going on with their wrestling. People would turn on their TV sets to watch their AWA on channel 2, and all of a sudden it was the WWF. People didn't understand what was going on. At that time, I was just about the only one who was writing about what was really going on. The magazines didn't know how to cover real stuff. They were so used to covering stuff in a different manner.

NEXT WEEK - Part 2 of the Dave Meltzer interview. Dave talks about developing contacts in the business. The evolution of *The Observer* from a newsletter to the #1 trade paper of the business. His insights of the mid '80s, the WWF expansion, and the promotional wars of that time, all next week in PWSN.

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

See page 9 for details on how to receive John Arezzi's Pro Wrestling Spotlight Newsletter each and every week, so you won't be left in the dark!

Potshots

By Bill Kunkle

Back in the saddle again. It's nice to move to a new home. Less than three years ago I pulled up stakes after 39 unforgettable (but increasingly debilitating) years and settled in the lovely valley some long ago explorer dubbed "Las Vegas", which roughly translates as "the place where people come to throw around money, get laid and watch Seigfried & Roy makes tigers disappear." Or else it means "The Meadows", I always get those two mixed up. The relocation was like a tonic to my jaded, big city sensibilities and I've done some of my best professional work since moving out here, including my stint as Subway Software's (the design end of Katz Kunkle Worley, the corporation owned by two partners and myself) lead designer for the computer version of "Batman Returns", which will be published by Konami later this year and has been getting tremendously encouraging advance word of mouth.

Likewise, our corporation (KKW) has recently switched publishers. For the past half decade or so we have been contracted by LFP (Larry Flynt Publications, the folks who bring discerning readers *Hustler* every month) to produce the entire 25-30 page computer section for a magazine we designed called *Video Games & Computer Entertainment*. We have just finished the negotiation on a new contract with Sendai Publishing to write for *Electronic Gaming Monthly*, the #1 selling videogame magazine in America (they advertise on MTV and Nickelodeon, for example), *Computer Game Review* and several other contract books owned by the company. But their big carrot was that we get to create our own magazine, dubbed *Electronic Games*, a name which will sound very familiar to anyone who was following the gaming scene back in 1981. The contract was extremely generous and will allow us to deal with all forms of electronic entertainment media, including video, computer, CD-ROM, CD-I, hand helds (Game Boy, Game Gear, Lynx, etc.), arcade games and even virtual reality.

So, it seemed an especially propitious time to give my old wrestling column, "Potshots", a new beginning, and when John was back jumped by Vince Russo, I knew I had finally found the perfect spot for it!

By way of introduction, this column ran for several years in *The Torch* and was, I believe, at least a contributing factor in the subsequent success Wade has justifiably enjoyed with that sheet. It was voted Most Popular Column in reader balloting after its first year and was the #1 non-Keller column in the following year's vote (the third year the poll was eliminated because Wade felt it was weighted too heavily in his favor). It has never been a universally-beloved column and has stirred its share of controversy and laughs. So, just to start me up, how about a little of each?

Safety In Scandal Isn't it ironic that Vince had been saved from total media excoriation by the very fact that his

organization is so incredibly scandal-ridden? The press — which knows diddly about the business in the first place — has actually gotten lost in the sleazy maze. A perfect example was the Donahue show, where, as with most of these shows (ask Geraldo why the Tom Cole segment wasn't shown on *Now It Can Be Told*, for example), the producers were either outslickered by Titan's high-powered lawyers or simply couldn't see the forest for the trees. The show was titled to create the impression it would be dealing with the Boy Sex scandal which Phil Mushnick in particular had been pounding home in the New York Post. Yet the issue never really came up and if it had, and anyone had mentioned Tome Cole's name, Vince had a skit ready to run anyway which would have defused it.

No, once again the process became bogged down in Billy Graham doing his steroid song & dance; Bruno's bitterness that the business, as sickeningly epitomized by the Million Dollar McMahon, has passed him by; Murray's slick sexual harassment number; questions to Barry Orton about wrestling's "casting couch"; and the fact of wrestlers' fundamental inability to get grievances resolved fairly.

Now most of these are legitimate issues, and they deserve discussion. But they pale beside the primary question which was barely touched on: Did, in fact, the WWF operate a child-recruitment operation under Mel Phillips that not only violated Child Labor Laws but was, in actuality, a pederastic brothel for the entertainment of top Titan executives?

When you come right down to it folks, the story of the so-called "Cream Team" is the ONLY issue. And it's ironic and sickening and not a small suspicion that in attempting to tell the story of wrestling's great sickness that so many slick tabloid and even better quality TV shows got so totally tongue-tied. But instant karma's gonna getcha, Vince. Gonna knock you right on the head.

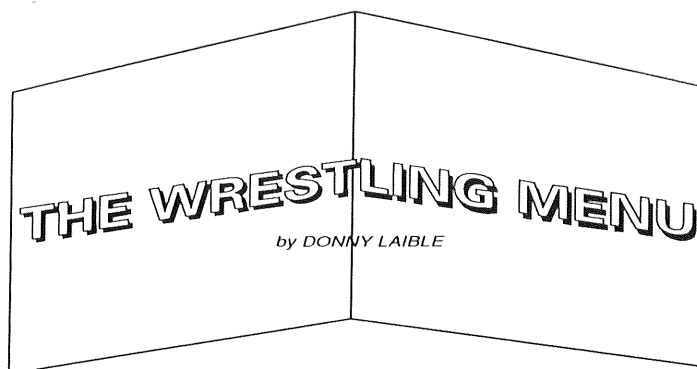
Speaking of which, has anybody else noticed that the WWF is digging into its old tape files (in the past two weeks, as I write this, materials from September and October of 1991) in order to show matches being ring announced by Mel Phillips? If anybody asks, Steve "Deceive" Planamenta will look all innocent and say, "B-but, they're old tapes. Honest!" So why are you showing them? Is it really THAT important that we see Tito Santana pretending to be a matador fighting Paul Diamond pretending to be a masked Japanese?

And if nobody asks? Then we have an open invitation to bring this character — who wasn't "employed" by Titan, according to McMahon, but who worked steadily for them for over two decades — back to the world of ring boys and the happy sound of their little feet padding over arena floors.

Here's the thing I keep coming back to, Vince defends himself with an intriguing line of thought when he isn't practicing character assassination: "Why would ANY sane man in my position, i.e., running a multi-million dollar corporation, allow such scandalous goings-on if I knew about them?" My response is that if you don't think Vince knew EVERYTHING that went down in his offices you are living on another planet. The TV announcers made

constant joking references to Patterson and Gavin's "activities" and even so far back as the mid-70s when I was covering the promotion run by Vince's father, I heard so many stories about Mel Phillips (who in those days vied with Prof. Elliot Marin for the job of taking the wrestlers' robes back to the dressing rooms) that I warned more than one young kid about him, just in case.

So once you accept that Vince HAD to know, I reiterate his question: why WOULD any sane man allow this to happen? The answer I leave to your imagination.



THE NAME GAME I have this guilty pleasure I must confess to: I love to scan the "Here & There" section of *The Observer* in search of the wildest wrestler names I can find. I used to love to see "Rock Hard Rick" and Kenny the Stinger" mentioned, and I yearned for the day when Nacho Burrito and King Kahlua would team up as "The Indigestion Connection" (finishing move: The Heimlich Maneuver). Now I have two new super-faves, one new and the other old, and I'd like to share them with you

The new name is "Fat Boy Potatoes" who appears to be working in Texas for Stomper's mini-promotion. Don't you just LOOOOVE that name? Roll it around on your tongue. Fat Boy Potatoes. Whew. Inspiration sure hit somebody square on the head the day they came up with THAT nom de guerre.

But the old guy I heard about was from Barry Orton, and if you want to read the whole story you'll have to buy *Wrestling Babylon* when it comes out later this year. Anyway, Barry was visiting his brother and he calls up this wrestler he used to know who used the ring name of — get this — BUDDY FRANKENSTEIN!! Think about it. Don't do anything else. Just think about it. The juxtaposition is so marvelous, it's almost a case book example of risibility, the thing that Webster's Unabridged says makes us laugh.

These days, Buddy is working as a beat poet who actually blades himself during readings! Usual coffee house fare, to be sure. Anyway, because of his use of juice, he's known as "Captain Blood," and Barry called him up to say hi.

AARRRGHHHAAAHHHHBRRRRUUGHHHHH," Buddy answered in that gruff, throaty, indecipherable growl one only hears from the throats of old wrestlers.

"Hey, Buddy Frankenstein!" said Barry

"YAAAGHHHHHFRRRRAAGHHHNEFFFFF!" responded the poet cum wrestlers.

"Do you know who this is?" Barry asks.

"NOAARGHHHHHFRRRRAAGHHHHH," Buddy informed him.

"It's Barry. Barry Orton."

"Oh, wow, Barry!" came the suddenly crystal clear voice from the other end. "How ya doin?!"

Some wrestlers NEVER stop working.

As you read this, pretend Willie Nelson's song "On The Road Again" is playing softly in the background. I'm once again writing this column while on a Greyhound bus, returning from a weekend in Boston. By attending "Killer" Kowalski's show in Grafton, Massachusetts which was headlined by Nikolai Volkoff VS Jimmy Snuka (drew a full house of approximately 900) for the first time I had the opportunity to meet and shoot the breeze with the "Superfly." Hopefully you'll enjoy some of my observations.

Let me tell you, over the years there have been many negatives said about Snuka for a whole host of reasons, which may or may not have been true, but he wasn't what I anticipated. Jimmy is one content and ext hospitable guy.

First off, a few random discoveries. He has no plans whatsoever in returning to Japan for Baba or Inoki. Jimmy was introduced to wrestling when he met wrestler Dean Ho while working out in a Honolulu gym, and the rest as they say is history. The seven years Snuka worked in the Pacific Northwest (1970-77) were his happiest times in the business. Coco Samoa, rumored for years to be the "Superfly's" brother, is 100% false.

Now living in Salt Lake City, Utah, Jimmy is enjoying putting on shows for fund-raisers. Vince McMahon Sr. was a man he had a deep appreciation for. As for Vince Jr. - Snuka claims he was called by Titan's czar for bookings to commence after Wrestle Mania, but said no thanks. Very much the family man now, Jimmy's wife helps him in booking shows and has one son attending Brigham Young University on a baseball scholarship and another son seven months away from completing his training for the priesthood. And now you know the rest of the story...

An interesting sidebar to Kamala's return to the WWF. It's been said he's afraid of flying. Here's a solution - have John Madden manage him, and they could travel by bus from town to town and split expenses...Recently watched for the first time in years the tape of Butcher Vachon's wedding that took place on an old TNT show. Albano, Sky Low Low, everyone was, at least I felt exceptionally hilarious in their off-the-cuff lines. Rent the tape and listen carefully to what David Schultz tells Vince (McMahon, not Russo) - man, that's a shoot if I ever heard one.

Of all the scandal reports concerning the WWF, by far

Bill Kunkle
Las Vegas, NV

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Pro Wrestling Spotlight Monthly July 1991

10.00

(Zaharion trial coverage)

Pro Wrestling Spotlight Monthly August 1991

10.00

(Vince McMahon press conference)

Pro Wrestling Spotlight Monthly Sept. 1991

10.00

(Live remote from Weekend of Champions convention. Bruno, Moolah, Cactus, OX Baker Rockin Robin and More!)

Pro Wrestling Spotlight Monthly October 1991

10.00

(Fred Blassie, Buddy Rogers, Terry Funk, Bruno)

Pro Wrestling Spotlight Monthly November 1991

10.00

(Explosive Eddie Gilbert interview)

Pro Wrestling Spotlight Monthly December 1991 (X-Mas show, Missy Hyatt, Cactus Jack)	10.00
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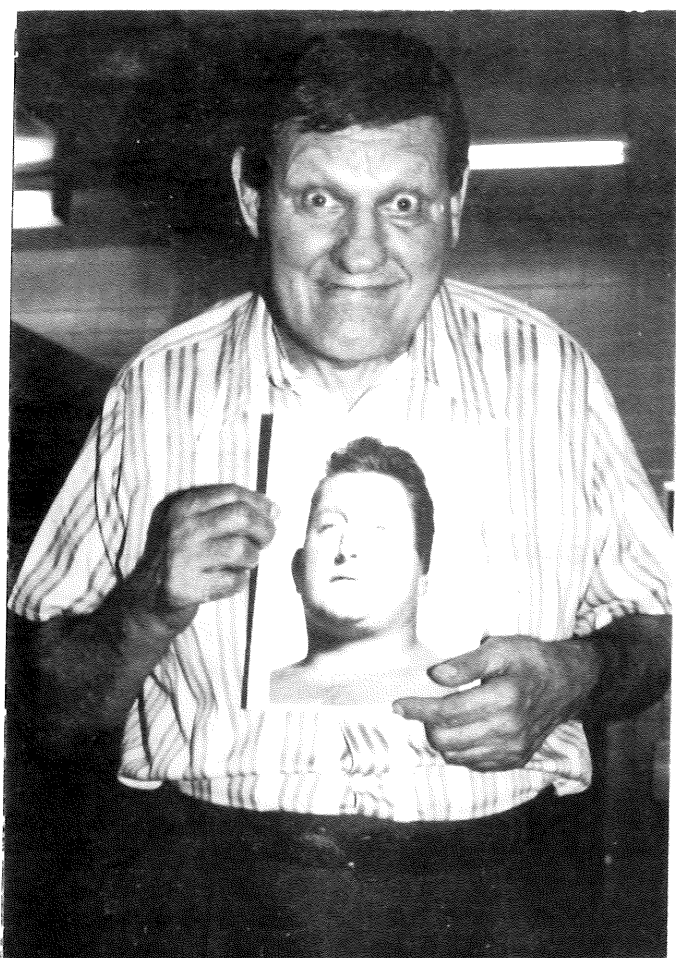
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And *Now It Can Be Told* is my favorite, I may be in the minority on this, but personally, what Rita Marie stated I believe was a first-class work...More and more former WWF boys sing the same tune about Dusty Rhodes. When he was leaving Titan, supposedly "Star Dust" told them once he got the pencil in Atlanta he'd be bringing them in, that they'd have jobs. Now, they can't even get through to Magnum...First of two wrestling quizzes - What's Jim Barnett's official capacity with WCW?

Update on Mike Shaw's travels. Working as Aaron Grundy in Mexico since January - look for him to take to the mats in Germany then England (for promoter Brian Dixon) this summer...This week Emily Dupree is said to be negotiating with TV in Halifax, Nova Scotia. If all goes through - he'll be opening the Atlantic Grand Prix territory this summer...The new WWF ring announcer, presumably taking "Footsie" Phillips' position is Wendell Weatherbee. You may have seen him in past years at WWF arena shows driving Savage, DiBiase and some of



Wrestling legend Walter "Killer" Kowalski holds photo of Yukon Eric. Notice, Eric's left ear is missing, the "Killer" knocked it off during a match in Montreal, Canada. Photo by Don Laible

the other stars around in a limo.

Any bridge players out there? If you think you're good at the game, next time you see Arnold Skoland, challenge him - he's an avid player...Has Jay Strongbow given birth

yet? Trivia quiz #2 - Who were Lou Super and Dusty Felbomber? In the referee department, who do you say is the all-time best? Johnny "Red Shoes" Dugan gets my vote.

After watching tapes of Bruno Sammartino from 1974 and 1977 wrestling Kowalski, Volkoff and Baron Von Raschke - the first word that comes to mind is believability. From the possible gimmicks stirring at Titan Towers - A) Will the Vincemiester drop the convict character and create a cop figure wearing LA patches on his uniform to feud with the Bossman? You know, the old good cop/bad cop routine?...Super and Felbomber were referees on the east coast in the early '70's who regularly appeared on the WWWF TV show.

Organizations looking to book fund-raiser wrestling shows in New England are urged to write the IWF: P.O. Box 67, Reading, MA 01867 for details...The Wrestling Observer can be had for \$12 for 8 issues by writing: P.O. Box 1228, Campbell, CA 95009-1228...Vince DiPalma-1233-33 Melville Road, Farmingdale, NY 11735 is looking for audio tapes of George Steele from 1971-73...The Pro Wrestling Torch put out by Wade Keller-P.O. Box 201884, Minneapolis, MN 55420 sells for \$5 for 4 issues...Wrestling Then And Now Edited by Evan Ginzburg-P.O. Box 471, Oakland Gardens Station, Flushing, NY 11364 is \$15 for a year's subscription, or \$1.25 monthly...The Wrestling Chatterbox-Georgiann Markopoulos-23-44 30th Drive, Astoria, NY 11102 sells for \$2.50 monthly.

What ever is pondering your brain cells on the wrestling world - run it by me - Donny Laible P.O. Box 443, Ilion, NY 13357



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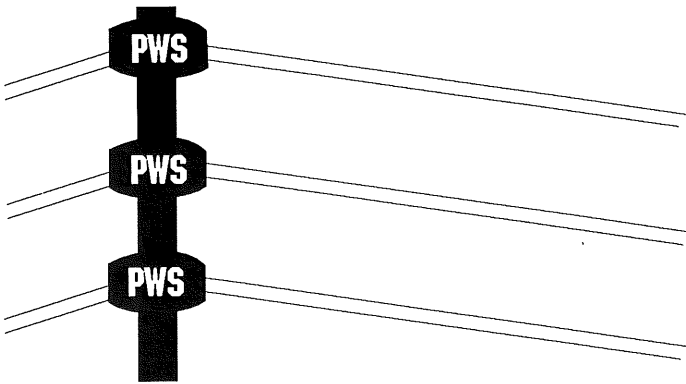
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Dear John,

First, I would like to commend you on your outstanding work in covering the sport. I really enjoy the newsletter. Your Mat Memories are very interesting and so are the ring reviews. I also look forward to Donny Laible's Wrestling Menu. It's an entertaining column.

I would like to comment on the WWF's latest angle, the Papa Shango - Ultimate Warrior situation. I would have to say that this is the worst angle Vince has ever thought up. Perhaps Vince didn't feel like thinking of any new story lines, so he asked a five year old fan to do the job. Pro Wrestling is supposed to be somewhat believable. There is always supposed to be the feeling that what's happening is legitimate. McMahon's first mistake was coming out and saying that professional wrestling is just entertainment and not a sport. He had no right to say this. He shouldn't have included every wrestling promotion, just his own.

I never thought Vince would stoop so low with this Papa Shango gimmick. Wrestling is not about voodoo curses and magic potions. It is degrading to the sport.

Hey Vince, maybe you should forget about the Shango gimmick and bring back Sid Justice, who could really give the Warrior a fight.

Joseph Puccio
Richmond Hill, NY

Dear John,

Your interview with Lee Cole on the 5/24/92 Pro Wrestling Spotlight Radio Show was most interesting - you did a great job of getting him to express his feelings while not saying anything he "shouldn't have" on the show. I also sensed that you were somewhat ill at ease with the interview, due to its sensitive nature. In my opinion, this actually added to the impact of the interview, showing how all of this crap has affected the personal lives of the individuals involved. The estrangement going on between Lee and his brother Tom, the ex-WWF ring boy, is truly a human tragedy. However, I must say that Murray Hodgson, although his story sounds true, comes across as somewhat of a "smoothie."

The Pro Wrestling Spotlight continues to bring the listeners a perspective on pro wrestling, as a business as well as a sport, which is not found anywhere else. I hope you continue to gain support from the sponsors and the fans so that you can "keep up the good work."

Pete Theophall
Eatontown, NJ



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HARDCORE HEAVEN

The Making Of A Hardcore/ Failing Booking 101

JEFFREY COHEN

I first got the wrestling bug in 1972 when I was nine years old. I was flipping around the TV in New Jersey on Saturday morning and found some guys tossing each other in the ring. But my mother bolted in and switched it off. She "saved" me from the reign of Bruno Sammartino.

I didn't get much contact with the sport until I got into college. I fell in with a crowd that worshipped Roddy Piper and soon we were forming a Pro Wrestling Club and trekking to the Meadowlands to see Hogan versus Big John Studd (primarily for the live Piper's Pit).

I stayed with the WWF since I didn't get cable TV until 1986. My appreciation of the NWA began when I overheard a Jim Cornette interview and stayed tuned in. He was hyping the *Great American Bash '88*, with the Triple Tower of Terror (if you didn't see it, don't ask). My friends were entertained by the event, even though we only knew about four or five of the performers.

I became hardcore accidentally, stumbling across Jody MacDonald's wrestling segment, which then aired at 1 a.m. on WFAN Radio. He gave the address of a publication called "The Wrestling Observer Newsletter." I sent a dollar, and received one of the best issues of that year: the wrapup when Ric Flair won back the World title from Ricky Steamboat and was attacked by Terry Funk. I had been taping the Clashes for six months, and now I had the inside lowdown. I never looked back.

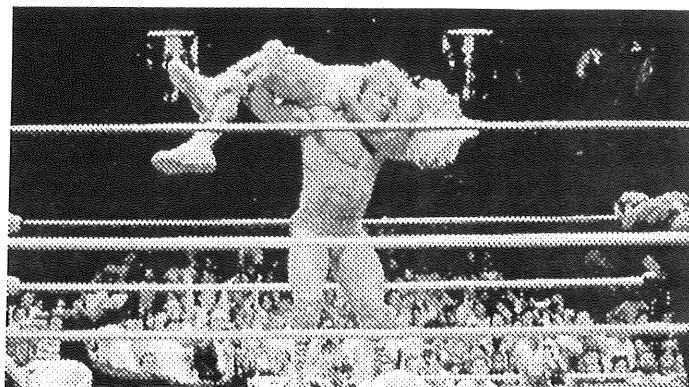
Cut to 1992. I publish my own newsletter, *Fantasy Federation*. I have a large, growing collection of videotapes which encomasses three shelves and threatens to swamp a fourth. I have worked a concession stand at an indie show. I have designed a lineup card for another indie. Does what I know outside the ring affect how I think about what goes on inside? Definitely.

I recall speculating with my friends about whether or not Paul Orndorff would take the belt from Hogan to set up *WrestleMania II*. Now that I knew more about the business, I could gauge from house results and contract negotiations whether or not, say, Lex Luger would stay with WCW or drop the title to Sting at *SuperBrawl*. It was more challenging, and whole new areas were opened, such as Japanese and Mexican wrestling.

Nowadays, with all the newsletters on the market, I pick and choose. The *Observer* and *Torch* are essentials, with *Three Count* and *Arena Report* rounding out my list of MVPs. I have high hopes for *Pro Wrestling Spotlight*, especially if "Potshots" returns and Don Liable holds to form. As long as you get one or two of the aforementioned 'zines, you'll never worry about whether or not Ric Flair is gonna get the WWF belt back or not.

* * *

Some brief thoughts on *WrestleWar 92*...For the guy who thought up the concept, Dusty almost blew the War Games this year. Although he surprised a lot of hardcores by having Bobby Eaton submit and not Larry Zbysko (to set up his immediate babyface turn), Dusty failed to generate any real heat on the heel side other than with Rick Rude. One by one the faces got big pops, but the only heel whose entrance garnered any reaction was Rude. Imagine that. Your big main event and nobody in the joint cares one hoot for any of your top caliber bad guys.



WrestleMania IX: Luger versus Flair? From the Meadowlands, April, 1990.
(Photo by Paul Kahn)

I did like Madusa and Sting scampering around on top of the cage. That was unexpected and a nice turn of events.

A bunch of things spoiled much of the undercard for me. If Cactus Jack is going to headline on the *Beach Blast* PPV in less than a month, isn't it common sense to have him squash someone on this show? Did the Junkyard Dog refuse to do the job? What is he, the company's top star? The One Man Gang refused to do a job for P.N. News and got fired. JYD refuses to do a job, potentially sabotaging the buy rate for the next big show, and will probably pin Jack at some house shows between now and showtime. Talk about no justice.

So what if Jack throws a mean elbow and "injures" the Dog? What a waste of precious talent. Jack lost at *Halloween Havoc*, was eliminated from 'Battle Bowl' when Buddy Lee Parker was pinned at *Starrcade*, pinned by Ron Simmons at *SuperBrawl* and now doesn't even get in the ring at *WrestleWar*. This is the win-loss record on PPV of the man who headlines the next card? Booking Grade: **F**.

So you hire Hercules, whose presence won't sell one thin ticket. You hire him over Bam Bam Bigelow, Paul Orndorff, Scott Norton, Johnny Ace, or even Don Muraco. You want to put him over big. How about putting him in with 5' 7" Joey Maggs? The size contrast will be incredible, and Maggs takes great bumps. Herc will look like a killer. No, let's put in Todd Champion. He can't work a lick, will screw up every move, and is taller than Herc. Booking Grade: **F**.

Ricky Morton versus Big Josh? Wasn't this the opener on *WCW Pro* in January? Booking Grade: **F**.

Keijo Muto comes to the U.S. and grapples at house shows and on TV, but you don't put him over for the upcoming PPVs and *Clash*? Booking Grade: **F**.

Van Vader to headline the *Great American Bash* PPV and he isn't on the card? Booking Grade: **F**.

A hindsight suggestion: Shouldn't Vader have been the one to squash Champion and Muto the one to squash Morton? Think about it. Two performers who will be in main events, not on undercards, being put over on a PPV. Ridiculous. Booking Grade: **F**.

All in all, a mediocre show with a great last hour. Hopefully the *Clash* will do well, as virtually nothing was set up for *Beach Blast*. Booking Grade: **F**.

TURNBUCKLE NOTE: Did anyone else read the item in the *Daily News* where Genesis frontman Phil Collins admitted his steroid use? "My voice usually gives out after an hour, so I take a jab of steroids," he said. The Ulllllltimate Pop Star!!!!

Jeff Cohen publishes *Fantasy Federation* bimonthly for \$1 an issue; \$3 for three issues, c/o 50 Shelley Lane, Great Neck, NY 11023.

Mat Memories

By John Arezzi

Last week I ran a reprint from the August, 1979 edition of Ring Wrestling Magazine, which detailed my newsstand magazine account of the night I wrestled Dusty Rhodes at a WWWF TV taping. It was partial truth, partial fiction. This week I'll tell you about what really went on.

First, let me begin by telling you that I had no formal training as a wrestler. I used to "fake wrestle" my little sister Donna growing up, and I put on a few TV wrestling matches in college for our campus station. I never stepped inside the ring before that night in January, 1978.

I don't know why I got the bug about actually wrestling in the late 70s. I knew it was something I was not going to make a career out of. But, after being a fan, writing for the magazine, and doing the college version of "The Pro Wrestling Spotlight." I wanted to at least try getting in there one time to see what it was like.

In the summer of 1977, I ordered some tights and boots from the world famous K&H Company, supplier of wrestling gear for many in the business. The first time I tried on the gear I felt like an idiot. It just wasn't me. I put the stuff away and kept it away until December of '77 when the bug struck again. This time, I decided to call a few contacts I had to see if I could get booked as a "preliminary" wrestler for the WWWF.

I called Ernie Roth (The Grand Wizard) and asked him for some assistance. He told me it wasn't that difficult to get me in, but he was concerned about the reaction some of the boys might have because I was known as a reporter. He also said once I "worked", it might be difficult to go back to covering matches because I crossed the line and they might not want me to sit ringside anymore because I was a "wrestler." I said I'd take my chances. At that point in my life, my interest in the business was waning, as college studies, girls, and a future in broadcasting was diverting my attention from wrestling. So, this could be my "swan song" in wrestling anyway.

Ernie told me to come to Philadelphia for the January taping, and he would introduce me to Gorilla Monsoon (the booker), and the rest was up to me. I agreed. If I didn't get to wrestle, I'd just cover the matches like I always did. I wasn't going to tell any of my wrestling correspondents or friends. I didn't even tell my family what I was planning.

The day of January 10th, 1978 is a day I'll long remember. I took a bus to Philadelphia, and arrived early at the historic Philadelphia arena. I waited outside a few hours until Ernie showed up. He took me in the back to introduce me to Monsoon. Gorilla looked at me and asked, "Where did you work before?" I replied, "Virginia", even though I had never even been in the state before. "Do you got your gear?", Gorilla asked. "Yes", I said. "All right, we'll use you." And that was that. I was a wrestler.

Please bear in mind that I never trained a day in my life. Back then I never knew what a "booker" was, I didn't

know the terms "jobber", "work", "highspot" or "Broadway". I was not smart to the business. I knew one word, "keyfake". I knew the score about the business, but was for all interests and purposes, dumb to the inner workings of wrestling.

I brought my gear inside the locker room. It was the first time I was actually in one. Sure, I spent hours in hallways, and press rooms at Madison Square Garden, but the locker room was taboo, even to reporters. I was scared shit. Looking around I was seeing guys like Bill Graham, Bob Backlund, Jay Strongbow, and one of my boyhood heroes, Spiros Arion. They were all kidding and joking around. I sat next to Arion. Now, I've interviewed many of these guys before, and shot countless photos of them. I didn't feel like one of them, now that I was changing into my wrestling gear. I got no physical from the doctor in attendance, just a temporary license from the athletic commission.

Silvana Sousa, the long time jobber spotted me and started quizzing some of the boys to what I was doing there. "He's a reporter, what the hell is he doing in here?" He then talked to Monsoon. I tried to blend in.

WHERE HAVE YOU GONE, SILVANA SOUSA?!



Everyone was called to the center of the locker room by Monsoon for the matches booked for taping #1. I was really getting nervous now. I was told it would be me and Silvana against Dusty. "Three minutes", barked Monsoon to us. Silvana and Dusty and I went to a corner and Dusty started calling the match. I just stood there, I didn't have a clue what to do. Dusty asked me, "Are you nervous, son?" I said "Yes", telling him it was because I never wrestled on TV before. After Dusty told us what would transpire in the ring, I took Silvana on the side and told him to bear with me. He had an annoyed look on his face and he said just to follow his lead and everything would be fine.

As I mentioned earlier, I didn't tell anyone what I was doing, so when it was time for my match, and I made my way to the ring, many of my wrestling friends were shocked. I tried to avoid eye contact with anyone familiar with me, not because I was afraid I'd laugh, but because I was embarrassed at what I was about to do.

Gary Michael Capetta introduced Silvana and me. I used the name John Anthony, billing myself from Boston, Massachusetts. There was a smattering of boos when my name was announced, but not much more. Earlier in the evening when Monsoon asked what I was, "heel or baby", I chose heel, hoping I would endure less pain if I played the bad guy.

Dusty came into the ring to the cheers of the crowd. I was just hopeful that the three minutes I was scheduled for would go by quickly, as it turned out, it seemed like an eternity to me.

The bell rang and Silvana and I went after the American Dream. We were both allowed in the ring at the same time. We got Dusty in the corner where I made mistake

#1. I started punching Dusty on top of his head, and he took exception to that. "Watch it!", he whispered. It didn't help when I drove a knee to his chin. It went in a little stiff.

Silvana took a bump, being thrown outside the ring, and Dusty and I were in the ring alone. He yanked me by the hair and said "I want to talk to you later", and he hit me HARD on the top of my head with his elbow. I saw stars! He repeated the move after pulling me up by the hair. Again, an elbow to the head. By this time Silvana was in the ring. Dusty knocked our heads together. He then gave me a snap mare (which was the only thing I did well). He then went to whip Sousa into the corner but I got in the way and Silvana clipped me. I went down again. People were now laughing at me.

The finish was approaching as ref Dick Whorley told us 3 minutes had elapsed. Dusty bodyslammed Silvana and dropped the BIG elbow on him. Then as planned, he attempted to do the same to me, except I didn't know how to get bodyslammed. Dusty wound up picking me up on a dead lift and just dropping me on Sousa, who was on his back. Dusty sat on my head, which was lying across Sousa's head and the match was history. I knew I screwed up.

I slowly went back to the locker room. Everyone who watched on the monitor knew I didn't know what I was doing. Dusty thanked me for putting over, and spoke to me about showing him up a little.

I found out I was to work two additional times that night, once with Joe Turko against Chief Jay Strongbow and Peter Miavia, and a single match in the third set of tapings against Bob Backlund.

After Sousa spoke to Monsoon again, I was told I was not to tag in during the tag match, I was just to be used in the finish. And I was, as I lasted all of 10 seconds in that match. I was pinned by Strongbow after being headbutted by Miavia. At least I didn't feel any pain.

When I returned to the locker room I was told that I was through for the night. I never got to work with Backlund.

I remember lining up to get paid, which was about 90 bucks. Arnie Skoaland handed out the pays. What I remember most was a bare assed Tony Garea getting his pay. He had just gotten out of the shower. He took the money and slapped it on his wet butt, which made the cash stick there. Everybody in the locker room exploded with laughter, including me. It was the only moment of the night that I actually felt like one of the boys.

Vince DiPalma Speaks Out

I can't believe Vince is putting the WBF Body Building Championships on Pay-Per-View. Then again, nothing Vince does should surprise me. The June 13th extravaganza should draw a lower buy rate than Herb Abrams' Beach Brawl. It's not hard to tell Hercules is the Super Invader. Take a look at that strut to the ring. It's a dead give away. - Lou Fabiano in Puerto Rico as Mohammed

Hussien. - Very impressed with Mike O'Hara's new mag "New Wave Wrestling." It's a refreshing change from all the mark mags out there. - Is Dusty Rhodes going to stand for Cowboy Bill Watts being his boss at WCW? Dusty likes to be his own man. - Did Sid Justice get suspended or did he leave because soft ball season is underway? - If Hulk signs a contract with New Japan, will he have to do jobs for Inoki? - I think Eric Brishoff is much improved as an announcer at WCW. - Curt Henning is doing a great job as Vince's sidekick on "WWF Superstars." - The "Jersey Devil" is back on "Cassette Wrestling News." Way to go, Devil. - Don't know about you, but I thought the Berzerker-Undertaker angle where Berzerker tried to run his sword through Undertaker was a bit much. Would children, who make up the largest part of Vince's audience, try this on their friends? - I thought the Warrior throwing up all over the "Doctor" in the dressing room on "WWF Superstars" after being cursed by Papa Shango was the ultimate (no pun intended), in poor taste. Family entertainment? Really Vince. - The Nassau Coliseum is now the largest drawing arena in North America for Titan. Still, the crowds are only about 10,000. That's a large house now a days. - No doubt about it folks. The Observer, Torch and Pro Wrestling Spotlight Weekly are the three best newsletters on the market. - I know the economy is bad, but how about everyone sending John a few bucks to help him out? You want to keep him on the air, don't you? Please send what you can and join John's Booster Club. Also ordering his video and audio tapes and subscribing to this newsletter will help. - Look for Ric Flair to recapture WWF title at Summer Slam from Mr. Elizabeth. I predict the Hulkster will recapture the WWF strap at Wrestle Mania next year. - Whatever happened to David McLane. On second thought, who cares? - I'm interested in getting some of the local wrestling community members together at my place to do an audio tape on the past, present and future of wrestling. Anyone interested in participating can obtain my phone number through John Arezzi. - 'Till next month, this is Vince DiPalma saying good-bye and good wrestling.

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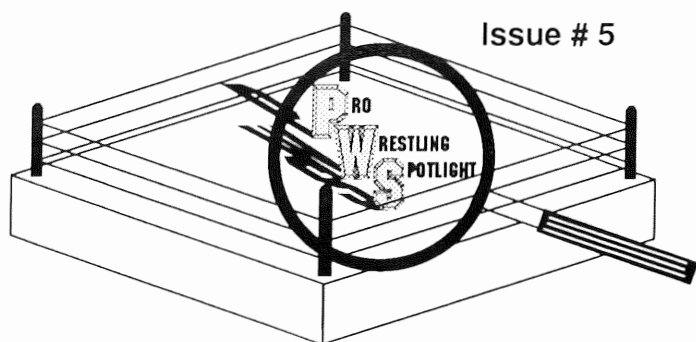
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